

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for manufacturing a security element for documents, forgery-proof labels, checks, seals and the like, comprising the steps of providing a backing layer and applying a covering layer to at least one face of said backing layer, the method further comprising the steps of removing preset regions of said covering layer with a laser beam having a wavelength between 900 and 1200 nm, said preset regions defining a code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said covering layer is constituted by ink.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said covering layer is constituted by a metallic layer.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said covering layer is constituted by an aluminum layer.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said covering layer is constituted by a magnetic layer.
6. The method according to claim 1, comprising a second backing layer which is applied to the other face of said covering layer, said laser beam acting on said covering layer through one of said backing layers.
7. The method according to claim 1, wherein said backing layer is constituted by a band or tape which can be separated in order to obtain threads, said band forming in succession a first region for obtaining optically detectable characters provided by means of conventional methods, said first regions being interleaved with regions for forming, in the covering layer, preset regions for obtaining said code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner.
8. The method according to claim 7, comprising, on said band, a region which can be coded and can be interleaved with said first region with optically detectable characters and with said region provided with a code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner.

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9. The method according to claim 1, wherein said laser beam has a solid-state source of the Nd:Yag type.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein said laser beam has a frequency which is preferably comprised between 1030 and 1100 nm.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein said laser beam has a wavelength of 1064 nm.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of removing said preset regions is performed while said backing layer is inserted in a sheet of paper.

10 13. A security element for documents, forgery-proof labels, checks, seals and the like, comprising at least one backing layer on one face of which there is at least one covering layer, the security element further comprising, on said covering layer, preset regions with removal of said covering layer by means of a laser beam having a wavelength between 900 and 1200 nm, said preset regions forming a code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner.

15 14. The security element according to claim 13, comprising a first region with optically detectable characters and a region with said code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner, said regions being mutually interleaved.

20 15. The security element according to claim 13, further comprising interleaved regions which have optically detectable characters, magnetic codes and said code which can be customized in any manner and detected in any manner.

25 16. The security element according to claim 13, further comprising a second backing layer which encloses said covering layer and wherein said preset regions can be provided on said covering layer by means of said laser beam which passes through one of said backing layers.